

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency



LL Harwell Road

Private Well Contamination

Gastonia, Gaston County, North
Carolina

Number 1

March 2017

Introduction

This information sheet summarizes the history of the Site, present Site status, and future activities planned for the Site.

Background

Between 1950 and 1978, chlorinated solvents were believed to be dumped on the property located on Jon D Road (incorrectly listed as Harwell Road on a previous version of this fact sheet) at Beaty Road, Gastonia, North Carolina. The owner of property hauled septic tank sludge from local industries. Previous owners also conducted septic sludge dumping and drum burial activities on the property. North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ), then called North Carolina Department of Environmental Management, became aware of the site in May of 1987 and began site assessment activities. The United States Environmental Protection Agency (the EPA) began supplying bottled water to impacted residents in July of 1989.

On December 26, 1989, the EPA issued a Unilateral Administrative Order (UAO) to Homelite Textron and R.A. McKee to conduct removal activities at the Harwell Road Septic Pits Site and to provide permanent alternate water supply to affected residents. On May 14, 1990, the EPA issued a revised UAO to Homelite Textron and R.A. McKee to include additional removal activities at the Harwell Road Septic Pits Site. The scope of this work included the removal and disposal of contaminated media. Many buried drums and contaminated soil was removed from the property. On November 2, 1990, an additional action was taken by the EPA due to TCE contamination in the groundwater. The EPA connected residents of the Southgate Subdivision to a community water supply system. Additional information on the site history is currently being researched.

As part of NCDEQ's ongoing and continuing efforts to evaluate private wells in the area, contamination of the groundwater at the Harwell Estates Community was discovered. NCDEQ advised impacted residents to not use their well-water for cooking, drinking or bathing. Contaminants found in the well-water include 1,1-Dichloroethene (1,1-DCE), Cis-1,2-Dichloroethene (cis-1,2-DCE), Tetrachloroethene (PCE), and Trichloroethene (TCE). NCDEQ began supplying bottle water to impacted residents.

NCDEQ also requested EPA assistance on March 8, 2017. The EPA arrived on March 9, 2017 and performed confirmatory sampling at the two private wells servicing the Harwell Estates Mobile Home Community. Sampling results were received on March 10, 2017 and multiple contaminants exceeded the EPA's safe drinking water criteria. The EPA mobilized additional contractors on March 9th to install a temporary, certified, drinking water filtration system and connect impacted residences to the public water system.

EPA Planned Activities

Installation of a multi-stage temporary charcoal drinking water filtration system began on March 22, 2017, and is anticipated to be completed by March 24, 2017. Once the installation is complete, the EPA will sample the water to ensure it meets drinking water safety standards. Upon receipt of the sampling results, the EPA will notify the community whether it is safe to resume using the water again; presumably by Friday, March 24, 2017. The EPA will then test the water, weekly, to assure that the filtration system is removing the contaminants. The charcoal filter media will be replaced if or when there is any indication of contamination. The final plan is to connect the mobile home park to the municipal water system (Two Rivers Utilities); this process can take several months. EPA will maintain the filtration system until the water line is installed.

The EPA and NCDEQ are currently investigating the source and extent of the ground water contamination. NCDEQ is testing private wells throughout the area. Additional residences will be addressed by the EPA if issues are found with their well-water supply.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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